



Testimony of Subira Gordon Executive Director of ConnCAN
Education Committee 3/1
Regarding H.B. 7150

Testimony on H.B. 7150

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Member Senator McCarty and Representative Berthel, and other distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is Subira Gordon and I am Executive Director of ConnCAN.

I am here to testify on H.B. 7150, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION

With his first budget proposal, Governor Lamont has positively signaled that he wants to build an education system worthy of the immense potential for kids across our state. His proposal does this through additional investments in minority teacher recruitment, connecting career to the classroom, and public-facing data reporting systems.

ConnCAN believes that every child deserves the opportunity to get a high-quality education, no matter where he or she lives. But today, less than 6 in 10 Connecticut kids can read at grade level. And right here in Hartford, more than 30% do not graduate high school on time. We must invest strategically to move the needle for all kids and ensure that the education systems supports our graduates to live, work, and invest in their future here in Connecticut.

However, the Governor's budget proposal falls short by failing to make meaningful and equitable investments in all public school options. The current proposal decreases the line items for magnet schools and the state's open-choice program, and modestly increases state charter school funding - specifically for planned grade growth at existing schools. The governor's proposed budget doesn't change the simple fact that, generally, schools of choice receive less per pupil funding than the state average.

Additionally, the Governor's proposed budget does not fix the state's unverifiable education funding formula. While the state has made positive improvements to the Education Cost Sharing formula (ECS), the system is far from equitable. Magnets, charters, vocational/agricultural, Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), and Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) continue to receive funding outside the ECS formula, resulting in unpredictability and political susceptibility. Each are a line item that can be altered significantly from year to year.

The Governor's education budget has the opportunity to fix the funding formula, once and for all. ConnCAN believes that the state should use a single education funding formula, determined by student need, a district's ability to pay, and should include all students, regardless of what type of public school they attend. That way, resources can go directly to where they're needed most, and the state can better measure the impact and nature of its investment.

The governor has expressed a commitment to long-term fiscal stability. Education funding can contribute to this vision if it is structured in a verifiable, rational and sustainable manner. While this bill starts a conversation about priorities, there are opportunities to strengthen the bill to ensure equitable funding structures for all of Connecticut's public school children.

We look forward to working with Governor Lamont and state lawmakers as this budget proposal moves through the state legislature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Subira Gordon
Executive Director, ConnCAN

About ConnCAN:

Founded in 2005, ConnCAN is leading an advocacy movement to ensure that all kids in The Constitution State have access to a high-quality education, regardless of their address.

Our work to improve education in Connecticut springs from our belief in the immense potential found within every child and our responsibility as citizen advocates to do everything we can to ensure we have an education system that lives up to this potential.

We strive to be resourceful and nimble as we advance the changes our kids deserve. We aim to see every win—and every setback—as an opportunity to learn what's working today and envision what might be possible tomorrow. We know we don't have all the answers and that we can only succeed by constantly testing our assumptions, working in close collaboration with others and investing in an inclusive culture enlivened by diverse viewpoints from across our state.

ConnCAN is a branch of [50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now](#).